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C O N F I D E N T I A L WARSAW 002598

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STATE FOR EUR AND EUR/NCE
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/17/2015

TAGS: [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [PL](#)

SUBJECT: ENGAGING THE IRAQ COALITION: NO CHANGE IN POLISH
PLANS - SMALL TROOP REDUCTION IN JULY, TRANSFORMATION OF
STABILIZATION TO TRAINING MISSION

REF: STATE 111082

Classified By: DCM Cameron Munter. Reasons: 1.4 (b, d)

1. (C) SUMMARY. Poland plans to reduce its military contingent in Iraq by roughly 300 for its fifth rotation that will begin in mid-July 2005, leaving approximately 1,400 Polish troops in the Multinational Division Center South (MND-CS). These troops will increasingly focus on training missions, as the Poles continue the process of handing over stabilization duties to Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). At the same time, the GOP will increase its training activities in Iraq outside the context of MNF-I, including bilateral programs, NATO training Mission Iraq and EU joint activities. Although the current Polish government has recommended that Poland change the focus of its mission in Iraq entirely from stabilization to training, the actual decision will not be made until a new government is seated following parliamentary and presidential elections in fall 2005. Poland is also deepening its political and economic cooperation with the Iraqi government, with a planned visit to Iraq during the summer by PM Belka, FM Rotfeld and MOD Szmajdzinski. We believe that the two center-right opposition parties likely to form the next government will at the very least continue the current level of engagement in Iraq, if not increase it. Embassy coordinated delivery of reftel demarche with UK counterparts, who delivered the message on the margins of the June 15 visit of UK MOD John Reid. END SUMMARY.

MOD/MFA: No change in policy

2. (C) DCM and DATT delivered reftel demarche on the Iraq Coalition to Andrzej Karkoszka, MOD Acting U/S for Defense Policy, during a previously scheduled meeting June 15. Karkoszka was unprepared for the Iraq discussion and said he could only respond "unofficially" but spoke nonetheless with an air of certainty. He reported that he had participated the previous evening in a Polish interagency meeting on Iraq policy, convened in preparation for FM Rotfeld's participation in the June 21-22 Brussels Conference. The meeting confirmed that there was no change in Poland's Iraq policy. The GOP intends to remain in Iraq, but the character of its deployment will change from stabilization to training. The fifth Polish rotation will arrive in Iraq in mid-July and will number some 1,400 troops, roughly 300 less than the current fourth rotation. Although they will still be combat troops, the Polish contingent will spend less and less time on patrols and stabilization, and more and more focus on training Iraqi Security Forces. After mid-January 2006, the Polish contingent in Iraq will cease to be an "operational force" and the GOP no longer intends to command MND-CS. Rather, the Poles will deploy a training element that is "highly visible but not substantial." Karkoszka stressed that these would still be military personnel, but not predominantly combat and combat support troops. Although he could not provide official numbers, Karkoszka speculated that the trainers plus their security and support elements might amount to something over 500 military personnel.

3. (C) Karkoszka added, however, that final decisions on Poland's 2006 deployments would be up to the new government to be elected this fall.

4. (C) Pol-Mil Chief and DATT delivered demarche separately to Amb. Krzysztof Plominski, MFA Director for Middle East and Africa. Plominski's response was consistent with Karkoszka's. There had been no change in Iraq policy since MOD Jerzy Szmajdzinski's announcement in March 2005 that the fourth Polish rotation would be reduced from 1,700 to about 1,400 and their mission would be reoriented from stabilization to training, with a view to transferring security duties to ISF as soon as practicable and appropriate. Plominski observed that, in fact, this is already happening during the fourth rotation, as recent press stories have reported. He said that the current government has "recommended" or "expressed its intention" to end the mission in Iraq at the end of 2005 "when UNSCR 1546 expires." However, the government realizes that it does not have the final say, as the annual decision on Polish deployments abroad will not be taken until December, by which time a new

government will have taken office sometime after the September 25 parliamentary elections.

15. (C) Plominski was aware of the May 31 UNSC appearance of Iraqi FM Zebari, and acknowledged the planning for a follow-on mechanism for MNF-I, either via UNSCR or some alternative legal vehicle. He said that the Iraqi Embassy in Warsaw had informed him that a letter would be arriving in the near future from Zebari to FM Rotfeld, requesting that the GOP extend its presence in Iraq.

PO/PiS unlikely to make waves, but looking for quid pro quo

16. (C) Plominski noted that Civic Platform (PO) and Law and Justice (PiS), the two center-right parties widely expected to form the next government, had not yet expressed a view on continued Iraq deployment. However, he noted that PO and PiS had supported the original decision to go into Iraq. He opined that the anticipated new government would be, if anything, more pro-American than the current center-left coalition, and would therefore be at least as well disposed towards continuing some form of Iraq deployment into 2006. In a separate meeting with Pol-Mil Chief, Polish NSC Director for Analysis Grzegorz Jazowski echoed this evaluation of PO/PiS.

17. (C) During a wide-ranging discussion, Pol-Mil Chief also discussed the Iraq deployment with Pawel Soloch, PiS presidential candidate Lech Kaczynski's defense advisor who has been tasked with coordinating the party's national security policy. Soloch noted that PiS had supported strongly the original Iraq deployment, and continued to support a strong security partnership with the U.S. He stated that PiS, and to the extent he could speak for them, PO as well, were in general favorably disposed to a continued military deployment in Iraq into 2006. However, he expected that Poland would seek an explicit linkage of the Iraq mission to U.S. help with defense transformation, including but not limited to FMF and other financial assistance. PO leaders have not explicitly discussed their views regarding troop deployment. However, both would-be PM Jan Rokita and once-and-future MOD Bronislaw Komorowski have publicly and privately reiterated their support for Poland's participation in Iraq, and they have told us that there would be no major changes in foreign or defense policy under a PO-led government.

Polish non-military engagement with Iraq

18. (C) After the discussion about military deployments, MFA's Plominski described the GOP's plan for expanding its political and economic ties with the new Iraqi government. He said that with an elected transitional government and interim constitution in place, it was now much easier to reestablish the strong political and commercial relationship that Poland had enjoyed before Desert Storm. He said that just this week he had instructed the Polish Embassy Baghdad to propose a late July visit by PM Belka, FM Rotfeld and MOD Szmajdzinski, for discussions of a serious deepening of political cooperation on all levels. Plominski added that the GOP would inform the USG when a concrete date is set, and would also request U.S. assistance with security and other logistics on the ground. (Plominski said that Belka might combine his Iraq trip with a visit to Tehran, if the elections there go "fairly well" and there is a government for him to meet with.)

19. (C) Plominski said that the GOP had been disappointed so far with the economic/commercial relationship with post-Saddam Iraq. (Prior to 1990, Poland had significant Iraqi contracts in such fields as construction, oil services and chemical engineering.) Exports to Iraq in 2004 had barely reached \$18 million, in contrast with over \$100 million to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and nearly as much to several other Gulf states. Plominski said that exports to Iraq should easily reach a similar level. He was hopeful that the situation was improving, based on a 1st quarter 2005 level of \$10 million. (Since 2003, Polish companies have signed procurement contracts with Iraq and the CPA worth more than \$360 million. As many of those goods are now being delivered, Polish exports to Iraq should be significantly higher in 2005.)

110. (C) Plominski reported that FM Rotfeld would present to the Brussels Conference several proposals on increased economic cooperation. The GOP hoped that the conference "will be a watershed" and would "end the divide between the U.S. and some European partners."

111. (C) Plominski also told Pol-Mil Chief that a "three-pronged delegation" would be arriving from Baghdad o/a June 19 on a GOP charter flight. Three provincial governors from the Polish sector will meet with the Ministry of Interior to discuss local/regional government partnerships. A group of Iraqi environment experts will explore

possibilities for cooperation with the Polish Environmental Protection Agency. Finally, Iraqi archeologists will consult with the Ministry of Culture on historic preservation issues.

12. (C) COMMENT: For the time being, the GOP seems to be maintaining a consistent position on Iraq, and MOD Szmajdzinski has refrained of late from making extemporaneous (and unhelpful) remarks on deployment. The fifth rotation will deploy in mid-July, and the General Staff continues contingency planning for the follow-on mission after December 31, whatever its nature may be. As the election approaches, the current government is likely to avoid any major decisions on Iraq or any other contentious issues. However, once the new government takes office in late October 2005, there will likely be a flurry of activity as it faces the December 2005 statutory decision on overseas deployments. We will stay in close contact with PO/PiS leaders and experts throughout this process.
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